

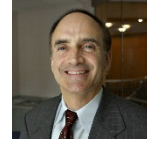


Exclusive to OpEd News:

OpEdNews Op Eds 8/9/2022 at 9:51 PM EDT

[Assault Weapons Should be Banned, We Should Not Allow Teens to Have Guns](#)

By [Robert Weiner](#) (Page 1 of 1 pages) [No comments](#)



Robert Weiner

By Robert Weiner and Lori Salazar

In the U.S., there have been over 300 mass shootings this year due to active-shooter situations with an assault rifle. An Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' (ATF) annual 2020 report estimated that there are around 19.8 million AR-15-styled rifles and other assault weapons on the market. It is also estimated that when the Federal Assault Weapons Ban ended in 2004, there were around 8.5 million guns on the market. Since then, the number of dangerous weapons has more than doubled and the amount of mass shootings has also increased. The only way to stop the number of guns used in active-shooting situations and out of the hands of teens is to implement a ban on all assault rifles.

On July 17, 2022, an active shooter killed three individuals in Greenwood Park Mall. The shooter legally purchased two rifles on March 8 and 9 in Greenwood, Indiana. Since the state passed the Indiana House Bill 1296 on July 1, 2022, this new law has allowed individuals to carry a gun without a permit. This law ensures that anyone in the state can be able to obtain a dangerous weapon without a thorough background check. The Indiana gun law only allows restrictions for citizens to purchase a gun unless they have committed a felony or dealing with mental health issues.

During a 4th of July celebration, an active shooter in Highland Park, Illinois, fatally killed seven individuals and left dozens injured. What should have been a festive parade became a nightmare because an active shooter was able to legally purchase a semi-automatic rifle and other pistols between June 2020 and September 2021. A

National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) report stated that the Highland Park shooter passed four background checks when he purchased his firearms. The only criminal offense within the shooter's history was in January 2016 ordinance violation for possession of tobacco, which is not considered a felony that could halt the legal purchase of a gun in the state of Illinois.

The Uvalde, TX, shooter was able to purchase two AR-styled rifles just after his eighteenth birthday since the state of Texas also allows for individuals to carry without a license or permit. A few days after this purchase on May 24, 2022, the active shooter shot and killed over nineteen children and two adults, making it the deadliest mass shooting in the state. Open-carry policies leave our communities across the nation vulnerable to dangerous active shooters. Yet nothing seems to be done in congress to be able to decrease the legal purchasing of guns by mentally ill and dangerous individuals.

On September 13, 1994, the Public Safety and Recreational Firearms Use Protection Act was signed into law by President Bill Clinton. The Federal Assault Weapons Ban prohibited the manufacturing of specific semi-automatic weapons with large ammunition magazines. In 2004, the ban expired due to a sunset provision and was never renewed by congress even as the number of mass shootings increased.

The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act was also signed into law by Clinton in 1993, which allowed federal background checks on firearm purchasers in the country and imposed a five-day waiting period to complete a gun purchase. The Brady Bill was introduced into congress by Chuck Schumer (D-NY) with the intention to prevent individuals with felonies to obtain a weapon. In 1998, the bill led to the FBI's creation of NICS, which is used to determine which individuals are prohibited from obtaining a gun due to a previous felony.

In an Uvalde Shooting Interim Report (July 17), an investigative committee by the Texas House of Representatives stated that no one was able to stop the Uvalde gunman from "conducting the deadliest shooting in Texas history because of systemic failures and

poor decision making" from its police force. The report comments that around "376 law enforcement officers descended upon the school in a chaotic and uncoordinated manner." The report also states that "the group was devoid of clear leadership, basic communication, and sufficient urgency to neutralize the gunman." "Law enforcement," the report states, "waited to take down the active shooter for over an hour," which was a gross failure to prioritize saving the lives of innocent children and other victims.

If we are unable to trust law enforcement to protect our communities, we must be able to ban the sale of dangerous assault weapons to adults of all ages, no matter if they are able to pass a background check or not. With the recent mass shootings in Highland Park, Greenwood, and Uvalde, we can see that background checks are not enough to stop a dangerous assailant from obtaining a dangerous assault weapon. Open-carry laws also allow for dangerous assailants to easily obtain and carry a weapon in public places, which endangers the safety of our children and loved ones. Banning AR15 and AK47 assault-styled weapons is the only way to help keep our teens, children, and communities across the nation safer.

Robert Weiner is a former spokesman for the Clinton and Bush White Houses, the U.S. House Government Operations Committee, and 4-Star Gen. Drug Czar Barry McCaffrey. He was Chief of Staff of the House Aging Committee under Florida Cong. Claude Pepper, which conducted a hearing together with the Science and Technology Committee under another Florida congressman, Don Fuqua. on "Space Science and the Elderly." Lori Salazar is a policy analyst at Robert Weiner Associates and Solutions for Change.